United Nations A/56/422

General Assembly

Distr.: General
28 September 2001

Original: English

Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 29
Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Letter from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly

In my report to the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, I called the attention of world leaders to the urgency of addressing the problem of unemployment and underemployment of young people. I furthermore committed myself to convening, together with the heads of the World Bank and the International Labour Organization, a high-level policy network on youth employment — drawing on the most creative leaders in private industry, civil society and economic policy to explore imaginative approaches to this difficult challenge (A/54/2000, paras. 106-111). Heads of State and Government meeting at the Millennium Summit took up this challenge when, in the Millennium Declaration, they resolved to "develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work" (General Assembly resolution 55/2, para. 20).

In collaboration with the International Labour Organization and the World Bank, I formed the Youth Employment Network and appointed as part of this Network a high-level panel to prepare a set of policy recommendations. The members of the High-level Panel are: Saifuddin Abdullah, César Alierta, Ruth C. L. Cardoso, Hernando de Soto, Geeta Rao Gupta, Bill Jordan, Allan Larsson, Rick Little, Maria Livanos Cattaui, Magatte Wade, Ralph Willis and Rosanna Wong.

I am now pleased to transmit to you the recommendations of the Youth Employment Network and its High-level Panel. These recommendations provide the international community with an important impetus to mobilize political commitment and practical action to rapidly increase employment opportunities for youth. I should be grateful if you would bring these recommendations to the attention of Member States.

As recommended by the Panel, I encourage Member States to draw up national action plans on youth employment as a matter of priority. I also invite the International Labour Organization to take the lead in supporting the implementation of these recommendations. I have requested the High-level Panel to continue to act in an advisory capacity to me on the issue of youth employment. I will report on progress within the overall framework of the follow-up to the Millennium Summit.

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Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the members of the Panel for the effort that they brought to their task and to James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, and Juan Somavía, Director-General of the International Labour Organization, for their partnership in this endeavour.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

Recommendations of the High-level Panel of the Youth Employment Network

I. A global alliance for youth employment

A. Introduction

1. The Secretary-General, in his report to the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, stated:

> *Together with the heads of the World Bank and the International Labour Organization, I am convening a high-level policy network on youth employment — drawing on the most creative leaders in private industry, civil society and economic policy to explore imaginative approaches to this difficult challenge. I will ask this policy network to propose a set of recommendations that I can convey to world leaders within a year. The possible sources of solutions will include the Internet and the informal sector, especially the contribution that small enterprises can make to employment generation.*

2. Twelve eminent persons were invited to become members of the High-level Panel of the Youth Employment Network and, acting in an advisory capacity, to provide their views and experience on how to best address youth employment issues. In addition to the high-level panellists, the Network involves a number of technical partners that play an active role in promoting productive and decent work for young women and men and whose knowledge and experience can enrich the work of the Network.

3. The recommendations set out herein are the result of consultations and deliberations among the members of the High-level Panel, taking into consideration the views of a wide range of technical members, youth organizations and those of the secretariat of the Network, composed of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

B. A new approach, a new political commitment and a new partnership for full employment

4. The recommendations are based on a new approach, the new political commitment given at the Millennium Summit, and a new partnership between national Governments and global organizations for full employment:

(i) First, young people are an asset in building a better world today, not a problem. In the next 10 years 1.2 billion young women and men will enter into the working age population, the best educated and trained generation of young people ever, a great potential for economic and social development;

(ii) Second, heads of State and Government at the Millennium Summit gave a firm political commitment to developing and implementing strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work;

(iii) Third, there is great potential for improving the employment situation through the integration of public policies for young women and men in overall employment policies and by making full employment an overarching goal for global economic and social strategies and for national policies.

1. A new approach: young people are an asset, not a problem

5. There are more than 1 billion young women and men in the world today, the majority of whom live in developing countries. Across the globe, they are making important contributions as innovators, entrepreneurs, productive workers, consumers, citizens and members of civil society. They are at the forefront of the information and communication technologies revolution. They are artists and athletes. Their culture enriches our societies and can be a force for positive change in cultural values. In short, young people are an asset, invaluable partners for economic and social development, bringing creativity, enthusiasm and leadership to the table.

6. Rapid globalization and fast-paced technological developments have already offered many young women and men unprecedented opportunities for

education, innovation and productive, rewarding work. Those young people entering the work force form a new generation with great capacity, the best educated and trained generation of young women and men ever.

7. For millions of others, however, globalization and technological change have created uncertainty and insecurity by exacerbating their already vulnerable situations, widening the gap between young entrants into the labour force and experienced workers, between those young women and men with well-paid and productive work and those with low wages and poor quality jobs. Many young people are failing to gain a firm foothold in the labour market. They are ending up with no job at all, working fewer hours than they would wish or else working in low-paid, dead-end jobs, mainly in the informal sector, with little protection, security or effective voice, and no real prospects for the future. Their individual experiences are further influenced by factors such as gender, ethnicity, geographical location and the state of development of the countries in which they live. However, statistics, sobering as they are, reveal little of the heavy toll that unemployment and underemployment take on young women and men, their families and communities through economic hardship, human suffering, social exclusion, lost production and wasted human potential. Not surprisingly, there is a sense of frustration and hopelessness among those who feel left behind by the knowledge economy and the network society.

8. Young people are now asking that their voices be heard, that issues affecting them be addressed and that their roles be recognized. Rather than being viewed as a target group for which employment must be found, they want to be accepted as partners for development, helping to chart a common course and shaping the future for everyone. Over the next 10 years, their number will reach almost 1.2 billion, the relative declines in the youth population of industrialized and transitional countries being more than offset by the increases in developing regions, where the majority of young people will continue to live. The expected inflow of young people into the labour market, rather than being viewed as a problem, should be recognized as presenting an enormous opportunity and potential for economic and social development.

9. **We, members of the Secretary-General's Panel, recommend that the heads of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization invite the youth of the world to build a strong alliance:**

- **to get young people recognized as an asset for economic and social development;**
- **to create an understanding that young people are a diverse group with various needs based on factors such as gender, ethnicity, geographical location and the economic development of the countries in which they live;**
- **to advocate more inclusive employment policies to fully utilize the potential of all young people.**

2. A new political commitment: decent and productive work for young people everywhere

10. The challenge for all societies is to generate sufficient opportunities for all young people to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity, a working life that makes full use of their talents, abilities and aspirations. This challenge is enormous. Heads of State and Government took an important step in mobilizing international action at the Millennium Summit by resolving to develop and implement strategies that give young women and men everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work. They made this commitment on behalf of their Governments. The time has now come for national Governments to translate the political commitments of the national leaders into public policies, at the global and national levels, policies to make the next generation of young people the first "decent work generation". The first step is to mobilize all national and local actors to be part of the commitment.

11. **We, members of the Secretary-General's Panel, recommend that the heads of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization invite all heads of State and Government to mobilize national and local actors to review, rethink and reorient past policies and implement new policies to fulfil the commitment to decent work for young people, made at the Millennium Summit.**

3. A new partnership: a global strategy, national action plans

12. The next step is to embark upon a new way of making policy, based on a clear recognition of the different responsibilities and roles of the United Nations system, national Governments, employers, trade unions and civil society for employment policies.

13. The United Nations, the World Bank and ILO will contribute by offering well-coordinated global strategies with employment as the overarching goal. ILO has taken the lead in preparing a New Global Agenda for Employment, which will form the basis for strategic alliances between the United Nations organizations and the Bretton Woods institutions. The New Global Agenda responds to the call of the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth special session, entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world" for ILO to develop a "coherent and coordinated international strategy on employment". The alliance between the United Nations, the World Bank and ILO on the youth employment initiative is serving as a model for initiatives in other fields. The whole international community will be engaged and provide vision and leadership in addressing this truly global problem. In this way the international community will also help to integrate youth employment as an important dimension in major forthcoming international events, including preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio + 10), where economic and social, as well as environmental sustainability will be a central concern.

14. Strategies can be shaped on a global level, but policies and action plans have to be developed at the national level. Here, government leadership is fundamental. A critical and self-critical review of past national policies is essential in the preparation of national action plans. A willingness to learn from more successful countries is another element. Equally important, policies and programmes should be based not only on the needs of young people but also on the strengths that they bring to businesses, communities and societies. For this to happen perceptions about young people need to change. Furthermore, Governments need to consider an integrated concept for employment policy. Employment policy is not a sectoral policy among others; it is rather the successful mobilization of all public policies with the aim of getting people into full and productive employment.

15. While government leadership is critical, Governments cannot do it alone. Business also has a substantial interest in making the most of youth potential, and in avoiding the negative consequences of widespread youth unemployment. Employers recognize that employing young people is good for business, as they bring to the workplace enthusiasm, energy, commitment, new ideas and the willingness to embrace change. There is also a role for networks and partnerships among Governments, at the national and local levels, employers' organizations, trade unions, youth organizations and other civil society groups: they can learn from each other and pool efforts and resources.

16. The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work provides a basic set of principles that, when adhered to, will help to provide decent work for young people.

17. **We, members of the Secretary-General's Panel, recommend that the heads of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization develop a new partnership between their organizations and national Governments in catalysing action for youth employment, where strategies are developed at a global level, while policies and action plans are developed at a national level.**

Civil society, the business community, employers, trade unions and youth organizations should also be invited to contribute to policy-making and implementation at both global and national levels.

C. Four top priorities for all national action plans: employability, equal opportunities for young men and young women, entrepreneurship and employment creation

18. There are many paths to success. However, across a variety of countries and different levels of economic and social development, a few common elements should be regarded as top priorities in every national action plan:

- Employability: invest in education and vocational training for young people, and improve the impact of those investments;

- Equal opportunities: give young women the same opportunities as young men;
- Entrepreneurship: make it easier to start and run enterprises to provide more and better jobs for young women and men;
- Employment creation: place employment creation at the centre of macroeconomic policy.

19. Information and communication technologies offer significant potential for welfare enhancement and employment generation among young people, and their impact on each of the priority elements should be fully considered in every action plan. Here, emphasis must be placed on closing the digital divide within and between countries.

1. Employability

20. In the world today, there are too many people lacking the necessary education and relevant training for good, productive jobs and there are too many unproductive jobs with poor remuneration. Education begins with literacy and, in spite of vast improvements, there is still a huge literacy gap. In many countries, training remains largely unrelated to labour market needs. Young people often lack access to the labour market services and support needed to help them secure decent and productive work. It is time to break the vicious circle of poor education and training, poor jobs and poverty. All countries need to review, rethink and reorient their education, vocational training and labour market policies to facilitate the school-to-work transition and to give young people — particularly those who are disadvantaged because of disabilities or who face discrimination because of race, religion or ethnicity — a head start in working life. Each country should set objectives and targets based on best practice/best performance for investment in education and training and other employability strengthening measures, leading to jobs and social justice for the young.

2. Equal opportunities for young women and young men

21. In many countries, where boys and girls have equal access to education, girls are doing better than boys at school. In a great many countries girls are not getting the same education opportunities as boys, with serious gender gaps in literacy as a consequence. Regardless of these differences in education systems, young women have in general greater difficulties than young men in entering — and staying in — the world of work, because of discriminatory policies, structural barriers and cultural prejudices. All countries need to review, rethink and reorient their policies to ensure that there are equal opportunities for young women when they enter the workforce and throughout their working lives. Each country should set objectives and targets to rectify the gender disparities in access to education, training and labour markets, and develop and implement the necessary gender-sensitive policies in these areas.

3. Entrepreneurship

22. There are too few employers and hence too few job opportunities in the world. Cumbersome procedures and regulations hamper the start-up of new businesses. All countries need to review, rethink and reorient the legal and institutional framework for business to make it easier to start and run a business.

23. Governments and international organizations should make it a top priority to obtain real, reliable and relevant data on the informal economy and on the rules and procedures required to set up and operate a new business within a legal framework. On the basis of a better understanding of the institutional obstacles, policies should be developed to allow this part of the economic system to be integrated into the mainstream economy and raise its productivity through legal facilitation. This review should be combined with respect for labour standards, which should be seen as a basic element in achieving productivity and prosperity.

24. Governments, at the national and local levels, need to encourage a broad and dynamic concept of entrepreneurship to stimulate both personal initiative and initiatives in a broad variety of organizations which include, but reach beyond, the private sector: small and large enterprises, social entrepreneurs, cooperatives, the public sector, the trade union movement and youth organizations. Countries also need to strengthen policies and programmes so that small enterprises can flourish and create decent work within an enabling environment. Each country should set objectives and targets for a broad reform programme, based on best practice, which process can offer more flexibility for enterprises and more security for workers.

4. Employment creation

25. Employability, equal opportunities and entrepreneurship, to be most effective, require an enabling environment where employment creation is placed at the centre of macroeconomic and other public policies. Employability requires not just appropriate skills and training but also public policies which lead to new employment opportunities where these skills can be used. Investing in youth requires not just better skilled youth, but a commitment by public and private sector partners to keep job creation a central concern of their investment strategies. Equality should follow a high road leading to increased opportunities for both women and men. Entrepreneurship should be supported not only through structural measures but also through growth-oriented macro-economic policies so that enterprises can sustain themselves.

26. **We, members of the Secretary-General's Panel, recommend that the heads of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization invite heads of State and Government to translate these four global priorities for a decent work strategy for young people into national action plans with targets for the creation of jobs and for the reduction of unemployment, and to take personal responsibility for presenting those plans to the United Nations by September 2002 on the basis of the political commitment made at the Millennium Assembly.**

D. The way forward: urgency, long-term commitment and partnership

27. Translating these global priorities into national action plans is only a start towards meeting the common goal of decent and productive employment for young people. An objective of these plans is to launch a policy dialogue and to mobilize partners for action. They will demonstrate the potential contribution which youth employment can make towards implementing national poverty reduction strategies, thereby helping to reach the international goal, agreed to at the Millennium Summit, of halving extreme poverty by the year 2015.

28. There are two time horizons for this exercise. First, work must start immediately — in all countries — to get the national action plans ready by September 2002. It is urgent and therefore requires leadership from the highest political level. Heads of State and Government should make this task a top priority of their Governments. As a catalyst to this process, the High-level Panel recommends that the heads of State and Government of 10 countries be encouraged to volunteer to take the lead in the review and renewal of employment policies for youth, and be supported in this process with policy guidance and technical support from ILO, the United Nations and the World Bank, so that their experiences can be shared with all other countries in developing their action plans.

29. Second, there is no quick fix: it requires long-term commitment. The review, rethinking and reorientation of national policies will have to be an ongoing process with political impetus over many years, through elections and changes in government. That is why broad coalitions and partnerships at the local, national and international levels are needed with employers, trade unions, local governments, youth organizations and other key players from civil society.

30. The United Nations, the World Bank and ILO will work to provide Governments and employers, trade unions, local governments, youth organizations and other key players in civil society with relevant and up-to-date indicators on youth employment, including data on the informal economy, on the costs occasioned by procedures for starting and operating enterprises and on the social and economic costs of youth unemployment. The purpose of this information is to help Governments to formulate objectives and targets and to develop new policies to promote youth employment. A list of specific recommendations, which could assist Governments and other actors in this regard is provided in section II below.

31. Furthermore, when heads of State and Government have presented their national action plans by September 2002, the United Nations, the World Bank and ILO should support Governments by making an analysis of the national action plans. This could be done on the basis of the ILO Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122). The result of this exercise will be presented in September 2003 and the conclusions will be used for the preparation of the next steps in a longer-term process.

32. **We, members of the Secretary-General's Panel, recommend that the heads of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International**

Labour Organization provide guidance and organize technical support over the next years for the policy-making process, ILO having lead responsibility for this effort. We furthermore commit ourselves to supporting the heads of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization as they assist Governments, social partners and youth organizations both to take immediate action and to build a long-term commitment to youth employment.

II. Decent work for young people: a guide to action

The following recommendations provide a guide to the range of actions that would, if vigorously and successfully implemented by the relevant stakeholders, improve the position of young people in the labour market. They also take into account the fact that young people are a diverse group with varying needs based on factors such as gender, ethnicity and geographical location.

Recommendation 1
A youth employment dimension integrated into comprehensive employment strategies

Incorporate youth employment policies into a comprehensive employment strategy and strengthen their linkages with macroeconomic, social and development policies by:

- Adopting an integrated and intersectoral approach to creating decent work for young people which links employment generation policies with principles related to social protection, empowerment, voice and representation, and rights at work;
- Incorporating such an integrated approach into a comprehensive employment policy framework that guarantees that the key policy issues affecting employment, such as investment, trade, technology, enterprise development, labour market policies and human resource development contribute directly and/or indirectly to employment growth;
- Making substantial employment generation and poverty reduction key goals of a national development strategy within a context of sustainable economic growth;
- Determining priorities and setting targets and goals in the implementation of national policies and programmes for promoting youth employment;
- Undertaking joint action with international financial institutions and development organizations to ensure that youth employment dimensions are included within the framework of national economic, social and poverty reduction strategies and technical cooperation efforts;
- Ensuring that essential human services such as basic education, secondary, technical and vocational education and training, basic health and other care and support services important to well-being and thus to building humane societies have a central place in budget priorities;
- Systematically monitoring and evaluating outcomes in relation to targets and goals, as a basis for facilitating continuous improvements;
- Fully integrating youth employment into the ongoing work of the International Labour Organization, mandated by the General Assembly to develop a "coherent and integrated international strategy on employment", and, in this regard, ensuring the participation of young people and representatives of the Youth Employment Network in the 2001 Global Employment Forum.

Recommendation 2
Strong institutional support for youth employment policies

Make social and economic institutions work for youth by:

- Ensuring that institutions which affect youth employment make optimum use of the potentials and capacities of young people;
- Providing mechanisms for dialogue and consultation with social partners, youth organizations and other civil society actors in the formulation of policies relevant to youth employment issues and concerns;
- Developing the capacity of youth organizations and other civil society partners to support their effective participation in policy dialogue;
- Increasing the impact of policies and programmes by ensuring coordination between government agencies;
- Reinforcing the capacity of public and private institutions, especially in developing countries, such as development agencies, local labour

market institutions and education and training providers to implement youth employment policies and programmes;

- Ensuring that national and local institutions are sensitive to the diversity of young people and their needs;
- Supporting the development of a knowledge base on youth employment, including statistical and other indicators that facilitate diagnosis, policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation;
- Contributing to mechanisms at the national level to ensure that youth employment initiatives reflect intergenerational solidarity and do not lead to the transfer of unemployment to other age groups;
- Contributing to mechanisms at the international level, such as the Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network, that promote global solidarity and more effective coordination of the international dimensions of youth employment strategy;
- Fostering greater coherence between the policy positions of Governments, the private sector and civil society organizations, as well as multilateral development institutions, and their operational activities.

Recommendation 3
Investment in education, training and life-long learning

(a) Adopt national educational and training strategies which set achievable targets for raising participation levels among young people and which make a strong commitment to adequate and sustained investment in human resource development.

Recognizing the severity of the constraints on raising revenue in many countries, advocate an increase in domestic resource allocation and external grant assistance for education of at least an additional $8 billion a year as recommended in the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All, adopted at the World Education Forum, held at Dakar in April 2000. This effort requires recognition of the centrality of the goal of education for all, a strengthened national and international commitment to increasing revenue both domestically and internationally, and sustaining a focus on reaching the targets in the coming decades.

(b) Ensure that girls and boys are able to obtain quality education that lays the foundation for employability and that fosters the development of attitudes and values needed to succeed in life by:

- Expanding access for all children to basic education;
- Improving the quality of basic education, including participation and successful completion rates;
- Taking specific actions to promote girls' education in line with the United Nations 10-year Girls' Education Initiative, launched during the World Education Forum held at Dakar;
- Giving special attention to disadvantaged groups, such as young people in rural areas and those with disabilities;
- Adopting imaginative initiatives and creative programmes to encourage young people to remain at school, at least until basic literacy and numeracy have been achieved, and which will provide opportunities for early school-leavers, including adolescent mothers, to continue their education;
- Providing incentives and support to poor families to ensure that child workers are taken out of the workplace, rehabilitated and provided with the opportunity to attend school;
- Developing learning opportunities for young adults with little or no schooling to obtain basic numeracy and literacy together with life and livelihood skills;
- Providing "new start" or "repeat" education opportunities for those that fail or prematurely had to leave school.

(c) Improve the accessibility, relevance and effectiveness of secondary and higher education and technical and vocational training so that both young women and young men will be better equipped to take advantage of opportunities in the labour market and to cope with fast-paced changes in the world of work by:

- Providing access to vocational training as a fundamental right in the provision of decent work;
- Promoting closer links between technical skills curricula and labour market needs and combining them with soft and other support skills needed for labour market success, through increased cooperation among employers' organizations, trade unions, training and education institutions and industry;
- Developing or improving training systems that raise skill levels and facilitate a smooth transition from school to work, through a combination of off-the-job vocational education and programmes of learning and structured training in the workplace, either in apprenticeship-based arrangements or other vocational skill pathways;
- Promoting equal access to technical and vocational training and higher education by providing gender-sensitive vocational guidance and counselling and by encouraging girls and young women to enter into male-dominated fields of study that offer avenues to new and promising work opportunities;
- Promoting a learning culture and establishing a framework for lifelong learning that, through the creation of incentives and cost-sharing mechanisms, encourages continuous investment in education and training by enterprises and by young people;
- Developing and improving competency-based standards, national qualification frameworks and nationally accredited training systems, in partnership with employers' organizations, trade unions, education authorities and training providers, to ensure the quality of public and private sector training and the portability of skills;
- Setting challenging but achievable targets for higher participation levels in post-basic education.

Recommendation 4
A bridge between the informal and the mainstream economies

Take concerted action to help improve economic and human capabilities, productivity and incomes for young people working in the informal economy, to facilitate the integration of this part of the economic system into the mainstream economy, by:

- Quantifying the magnitude of the informal economy and generating relevant information on the value of informal enterprises, assets and work, as well as the characteristics of extralegal rules governing informal production and transactions and the institutional barriers that prevent most enterprises from becoming more productive and generating decent employment in the legal economy;
- Creating simplified and enabling legal and regulatory frameworks that remove bureaucratic obstacles to setting up and operating small and microenterprises;
- Modifying laws and regulations to assign property rights to the informal assets of the poor, thereby enabling young workers and entrepreneurs to deploy them in production and income generation;
- Promoting avenues for the graduation of enterprises from the informal to the formal economy;
- Helping young people, particularly women, to make the transition from informal to formal employment through improved access to training, business development services, business linkages such as mentoring and financial instruments including microfinance;
- Connecting young informal workers to expanding market opportunities through the supply/value chains used by Governments, international development institutions and private businesses to purchase, subcontract or outsource goods and services;
- Harnessing the creativity and potential of young people in the informal economy to develop new business ideas and service delivery mechanisms

to cater to changing national and international markets;

- Encouraging the development of self-help groups and membership-based organizations, including cooperatives, among young people, so that they can better organize for accessing supplies, information, credit and markets.

Recommendation 5
The potential of information and communication technologies

Adopt national strategies to harness the employment generation and welfare-enhancement potential of information and communication technologies (ICT) for the benefit of young women and men by:

- Providing young people with opportunities to develop ICT literacy through the education system and/or ICT training facilities, and also providing them with affordable access to computers and the Internet;
- Building the technical ICT skills of young people in collaboration with the ICT industry, educational institutions and other actors to design and accredit culturally relevant and youth-friendly courses;
- Exploiting opportunities for paid employment and self-employment, and entrepreneurial activities offered by the development of internationally and domestic-oriented ICT industries and the deployment of ICT across different industry groups, paying special attention to the needs of particular groups, including young people with disabilities;
- Making greater use of both new and traditional information and communication technologies as tools for development and for greater voice and empowerment for all groups of young people in collaboration with employers' organizations, trade unions, ICT service vendors, non-governmental organizations, youth organizations and other national and international partners;
- Taking action to bridge the ICT gender divide within as well as among countries by eradicating factors that restrict equal access to ICT; providing and supporting education and ICT training for both young women and young men; and encouraging young women to participate in the design of the content and modes of use of ICT. In countries where cultural norms and traditions isolate women, maximize the potential of the Internet to provide young women with new means of access to learning and information;
- Creating an enabling environment for ICT diffusion through infrastructure development and appropriate trade and fiscal policies and legislative frameworks, mobilizing domestic and foreign investment;
- Facilitating and fostering community initiatives and partnerships between public, private and multilateral institutions to ensure that actions at the local, national and international levels to bridge the digital divide are mutually reinforcing.

Recommendation 6
New sources of work in the service sector

Exploit the new opportunities for employment of young people being opened up by the rapidly expanding service sector, by:

- Recognizing that human services such as education, health and personal care for the young, the old, the sick and the disabled, which are essential for the development of equitable societies, are among the most labour-intensive forms of employment and offer new and increasing employment opportunities for young people;
- Using labour-intensive methods for infrastructure investments and environmental restoration works, and training young people as small-scale private contractors to execute such works;
- Expanding the access of young people to sectors such as environmental conservation, tourism, entertainment and mass media, and other service areas that might be particularly appealing to young people, by means of training and public/private partnerships;
- Introducing youth employment and work-based training as a new dimension of the contracting

procedures of municipal authorities and other government agencies, including government projects funded by international agencies;

- Working in collaboration with youth groups, community-based organizations, trade unions and employers to develop employment opportunities and work-based training as an alternative to social assistance and to provide skill enhancement and training for young people;
- Encouraging young people to develop ideas and implement projects in social entrepreneurship, combining business skills with socially responsible objectives.

Recommendation 7
Entrepreneurship and enterprise development

Promote innovation and entrepreneurship for young people, as well as employment opportunities through enterprise development, by:

- Creating awareness through the media and the education and training system of entrepreneurship and self-employment as viable and rewarding career options;
- Providing information on market opportunities, training in business skills, access to capital, mentoring by qualified persons and other business support services tailored to the needs of small firms and young entrepreneurs;
- Encouraging financial institutions to provide credit and other financial services at affordable prices to support youth entrepreneurship and enterprise development;
- Supporting youth entrepreneurship in areas such as design, technology and marketing where the openness to and awareness of young people to new trends could help to link traditional small firm activities in developing countries to international markets;
- Promoting the formation of inter-firm networks and self-help associations, among microfirms and young entrepreneurs, to enable them to exchange experience and undertake initiatives such as participating jointly in trade fairs and sharing infrastructure, ICT and incubation facilities; and encouraging the development of employers' organizations to provide support services and representation;
- Facilitating learning and the exchange of experience among practitioners supporting youth entrepreneurship and small enterprise development, as a means of improving the effectiveness of existing and new youth programmes;
- Promoting youth entrepreneurship in the social sector, for example, providing community services and/or addressing local environmental and health issues;
- Promoting mentoring arrangements between existing enterprises and young people by enlisting the support of families and service organizations;
- Recognizing the value of civil society organizations in increasing employment opportunities for young people.

Recommendation 8
Access of youth to employment services and support

Expand and improve the range of labour market services available to young people as a means of facilitating their better and faster access to work by:

- Supplying more up-to-date and relevant labour market and business-related information, for example on opportunities for specialized training, continuing education and job placement, as well as information about young workers' rights and the required skills and training for work;
- Providing more effective and gender-sensitive job search assistance and placement services for young people, through schools, employment services, internships or job clubs, as well as support for both young women and young men wishing to start their own business;
- Promoting the implementation of non-discriminatory labour laws regarding equal recruitment and retention of young women and men; this includes helping them to reconcile work and family responsibilities;

- Using "role models" to advocate positive attitudes towards work;
- Facilitating more opportunities for mentoring, internship and work experience opportunities for young people entering the labour market and on-the-job follow-up programmes for those already at work;
- Making increasing use of specialized youth employment "one-stop" and mobile facilities which offer a suite of readily accessible labour market services to young people;
- Expanding the use, where feasible, of information and communication technologies as a tool for disseminating career materials and labour market and business-related information, and for facilitating job-matching processes;
- Providing special services for "at risk" youth who are on the fringes of the labour force or are unemployed, such as special counselling services, job search advice and assistance, opportunities for work experience, training for employability and publicly financed job creation projects implemented by the private sector or local community.

Recommendation 9
A social floor for working youth

Ensure a social floor for young people by improving their working conditions, promoting their rights and recognizing their voice and representation at work by:

- Raising the awareness of young workers of their fundamental rights at work and educating and equipping them to claim those rights;
- Promoting the organization and representation of young workers and entrepreneurs by trade unions, employers' organizations or other organizations of their own choosing, in accordance with the ILO Conventions concerning freedom of association;
- Bringing young people into the national policy debate by ensuring that their roles are recognized and their voices heard and respected — "listen and learn from young people";
- Ensuring that young people are adequately and fairly represented and have speaking and voting rights on the boards of trade unions, employers' organizations and other civil society organizations;
- Supporting pilot programmes and self-help initiatives to improve the safety, health and working conditions of all workers, in particular those young workers in the informal economy who typically fall outside formal protection systems, as well as facilitating linkages between those initiatives and formal institutions;
- Elaborating a framework, in consultation with workers' and employers' organizations, to provide access to social protection and active labour market policies that assist in the transition of young people into other work after a job loss;
- Adopting measures in collaboration with government agencies, employers' organizations and trade unions to extend the coverage of social protection systems and legal and regulatory instruments to young workers in the informal economy and in flexible forms of work associated with the knowledge economy;
- Providing technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to enable them to develop social protection systems for vulnerable, unprotected and uninsured young workers;
- Paying particular attention to the improvement of working conditions, the provision of health services and social security, the right of representation, and protection from discrimination and sexual harassment of young women, especially those working in export processing zones;
- Giving support and protection to young women and men with HIV/AIDS through joint action by Governments, employers, trade unions and youth organizations in compliance with the ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work, including the use of the workplace for information-sharing and counselling about the risks of HIV/AIDS.

Recommendation 10
Partnership for youth employment

Extend outreach and mobilize networks to promote youth employment locally, nationally and internationally, by:

- Encouraging youth organizations to take initiatives and actions at community and national levels;
- Providing support and services for network-building and the exchange of knowledge and experience about the youth employment programmes that work at the local level, and how they can be expanded to increase their impact;
- Encouraging public, private and civil society partners to pool their knowledge and resources to jointly launch innovative youth employment programmes that are sustainable;
- Undertaking joint research and evaluation on issues relating to youth employment, including better methodologies to evaluate the social and financial costs of youth unemployment and underemployment, and the benefits of youth employment policies and programmes;
- Learning from the experience of other countries, particularly those in the South, through innovative partnerships such as twinning development agencies, universities or cities;
- Calling on the international community to provide support, where needed, and to facilitate the coordinated exchange of ideas and experience, especially through the use of the Internet to compile and exchange information.

Recommendation 11
An enabling international environment

Recognizing that effective, sustained application of these policies by many countries should be supported by major improvements in the international economic and financial environment, these changes must include:

- Provision by all developed countries of duty-free, quota-free market access to all non-arms exports of the 49 least developed countries, and consideration of extending this provision to other developing countries;
- Redoubling of efforts to increase the amount of overseas development assistance and to meet the international commitment to provide 0.7 per cent of GNP for aid, as a necessary complement to attracting private funds and a condition for escaping the poverty trap;
- Continuing the process of debt cancellation by bilateral and multilateral creditors and, in that context, ensuring that youth employment is substantively addressed in poverty reduction strategies developed by highly indebted poor countries, and also that young people are fully consulted in the development of those strategies;
- Striving to create the conditions necessary to attract and increase the flow of long-term private investment;
- Reform of the international financial structure to reduce the risk of financial volatility;
- Exploration of new and innovative sources of external funding for development.

Recommendation 12
Future of the Youth Employment Network

Recognizing the need for concerted and coordinated international action on youth employment, we are conveying these recommendations to the Secretary-General for consideration and action by the international community. We, moreover, commit ourselves to working with the Secretary-General in the coming years for the implementation of these recommendations. Furthermore:

- We commit ourselves to raising awareness about and building support for the Network and, more generally, to promoting decent work for young people;
- We support the widening of the scope of the Network to make it truly global, reaching out to other partners at the regional and national levels, the International Labour Organization having the lead responsibility for this effort, including the organization of the secretariat and promoting

fund-raising from Governments, corporations and foundations;

- We recommend the linking of the Network to other international programmes, including major initiatives of the United Nations system and other multilateral initiatives;

- We recommend that the International Labour Organization launch an international action programme on youth employment in support of the Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network;

- We advocate the launching, on a pilot basis, of concrete youth initiatives which are sustainable and which can be replicated, and we commit ourselves to supporting those initiatives;

- We recommend the establishment of an interactive web site for the Network for raising awareness, facilitating dialogue, providing policy tools, and sharing good practice in promoting productive and rewarding work for young people;

- We commit ourselves to meeting in one year's time under the auspices of the Secretary-General, to reviewing the progress made and lessons learned by the Network, and to continuing collaboration with the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization in translating these recommendations into action.